New York State Ski Racing Association - Nordic, Inc.

SPRING MEETING MINUTES
April 27, 2022
by Zoom.com

President Darwin Roosa called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and welcomed everyone attending virtually. In his opening remarks, Darwin commended everyone for the successful 2021-2022 Nordic racing season even though we had a late start. He thanked all organizers and volunteers for their efforts to plan and hold race events. Special thanks go to Ed Luban for again being the receiver and reviewer of forms for sanctioning clubs and events for the race calendar. Appreciation was expressed to Larry Wilkinson for organizing the Empire State Winter Games cross country ski competition, Brian Burr for biathlon, Janet Findlay for ski orienteering, Eric Seyse for maintaining the XC points list, and Saratoga Biathlon for hosting the NY Biathlon and NYSSRA Nordic Cross Country Ski Championship races.

Darwin noted that 2022 is the beginning of NYSSRA Nordic's 41st year. He described several changes in the organization's work during those years. A major change in 2008 was the adoption of a structure to encourage club development and participation in NYSSRA Nordic affairs. A representative from each club has a vote on matters at meetings.

Present: Brian Burr (biathlon chair & Saratoga Biathlon); Marc Chmielewicz (Vice President & GHN-ADK); Sean Halligan, (Saratoga Biathlon); Eric Hamilton, (Secretary & Shenendehowa Nordic); Phil Matthews (HURT); Peter Minde, (Peru Nordic); Tom Moffett, (Saratoga Biathlon); Darwin Roosa (Pres); Jack Rueckheim (Cayuga Nordic); Eric Seyse, (GHN-ADK); and James South (PACCSA).

Minutes Eric Hamilton moved that the minutes of the September 22, 2021 meeting be accepted; Phil Matthews second, carried.

Treasurer's Report - Darwin Roosa reported that Ed Lis had resigned as treasurer effective December 31, 2021. Jack Rueckheim was elected our new treasurer by an e-mail vote of Executive Officers on January 23, 2022 pending a formal election at this meeting. A nomination made by Darwin Roosa with a second from Mark Chmielewicz passed unanimously for the formal installation of Jack Rueckheim as treasurer. Jack went over the treasurer's report (attachment 1) showing a balance of $39,144 as of March 31, 2022. Subtracting out the Mid-A balance our assets are $21,931. Eric Seyse moved we accept the report, Eric Hamilton second, carried. Darwin Roosa thanked Ed Lis for the three years he served as treasurer praising his transparency, thoroughness, and high level of professionalism. Darwin Roosa also pointed out that membership for the season is just under 400.

Committee Reports

Biathlon – Brian Burr reported that NY Biathlon had a successful season with 75 unique individuals participating and added that we have many juniors coming up. Many NY biathletes competed and several volunteers worked at the 2022 US Biathlon Nationals in Lake Placid. The new targets worked well. He pointed out the challenge to obtain enough volunteers to work biathlon events at the FISU World University Games next season. NY Biathlon is looking forward to a series of running and mountain bike biathlon races this summer. Next season there will be a NY - VT points list. (See attachment 2 for the complete report that includes the tentative summer race calendar).

Ski Orienteering - Darwin Roosa summarized Janet Findlay's report (attachment 3). The usual start to the season at Lapland Lake could not be rescheduled. The ski O adventure at Berne

was poorly attended. The ESWG attracted 20 participants. Canadian border closure precluded international participation.
Cross Country - Eric Seyse reported that 125 NYSSRA members did a race. In addition, 261 racers paid a $5 membership for a day. He reported 40 replies to his survey which indicate that the primary way racers were informed of events was through the weekly e-newsletter.
Mid Atlantic – Darwin Roosa reported for Jason Hettenbaugh that 17 Mid-Atlantic junior racers competed at the 2022 US Junior Nationals in Minneapolis in March. Jason coordinated the trip with assisting trip coaches Nick Kulina, Julianne Stemp, and Lynn Gaffney. Trip expenses were paid from participant funds deposited in the Mid-Atlantic Fund and Mid-A fund balances. A major expense of nearly $4,000 this year was for purchasing new ski waxes to restock supplies for use at the Nationals. This was mainly due to no longer using fluorinated waxes. The new wax supplies will be used in subsequent race seasons.
Bill Koch Youth Ski League - In the absence of a report from the committee chair, Eric Hamilton reported a fantastic area participation from five school districts: 31 youth participated. Sean Halligan pointed out that none of these youth signed up for NYSSRA membership despite the fact that their membership is free. The season Bill Koch Festival was poorly attended attributed to the nor'easter the night before that continued into Saturday making driving to Osceola difficult.
Insurance Report - Sean Halligan pointed out that for 2021-22 we have a new insurance carrier and the cost of the premium was $3,799. Providing additional insurance certificates is easier, but the new carrier insists on background checks for all coaches and volunteers involved with youth. The background checks are conducted by the National Center for Safety Initiatives and cost $30 per person that is paid by NYSSRA Nordic. He estimated that background checks are needed for about 30 people and that several were completed last season. Sean stated that coaches and volunteers involved with youth must be NYSSRA Nordic members for our liability coverage. Some coaches and volunteers who race during the season are already members. Sean moved we offer a reduced membership fee of $15 for non-racing coaches and volunteers and that a membership category for them be added to SkiReg. Eric Seyse second, carried. This membership requirement will be added to the Background Check Policy that is posted on the website. Sean also noted several race organizers still need to send him their Event Sign-In Waiver sheets for their races.

There was consensus on a recommendation from Sean that we do a hard copy mailing directly to clubs by late summer about club requirements for listing coaches and volunteers, and other updates for making the event sanctioning process for events go smoother. Club membership forms should include getting a mailing address for the club.

Executive Directors Report – Darwin Roosa noted that Bob Underwood's role as NYSSRA Nordic executive director is authorized on a seasonal basis with an annual stipend paid for services. For the minutes, Darwin pointed out that Bob was re-appointed to the job for the 2021-22 season by email vote of Executive Officers on December 22, 2021. Bob Underwood was not present for this meeting to report on fund raising activities and other accomplishments during the 2021-22 season. Darwin reported that Bob facilitated $500 donations each from Warren Tire and High Peaks Cyclery. Bob maintained liaison with the NYS High Schools on several topics e.g., specifics of the fluorinated wax prohibition for consistency with NYSSRA Nordic wax policy. Using Constant Contact design software, Bob compiled and sent 10 issues of the "Latest News for You" e-newsletter during the season. Racers, coaches, and families appreciated receiving the weekly newsletter for looking up race results, reading brief articles, checking upcoming race schedules with convenient registration links to SkiReg, and enjoying photos from races. Bob plans to do the newsletter during the off-season, possibly one per month, but needs to receive content and photos. He wants to promote summertime NYSSRA Nordic sanctioned clinics,

camps, roller ski races, group dryland training events, and articles about off-season training. Darwin Roosa moved we authorize a $2,500 payment plus $500 to close out our financial obligations to the executive director for the season, Jack Rueckhiem second, carried unanimously.

Old Business

Executive Director - Darwin moved that we reappoint Bob Underwood for the coming 2022-2023 year with the same stipend, Phil Matthews second, carried. Bob will compile a proposed plan of projects for next season to present at the fall meeting.

Publicity and Marketing – It was agreed that a FaceBook presence for following by NYSSRA Nordic members is essential for regular publicity. We just need a few people to get it started and keep it going with frequent posts. There was discussion on an early season full page marketing ad and an article in the likes of *Adirondack Sports and Fitness* and possibly *Adirondack Explorer* magazine to promote pre-season enthusiasm and stimulate memberships. No action taken. Darwin will explore the potential for these ideas by contacting Darryl Caron to get ad rates.

Ideas Forum

This part of the meeting included an opportunity for participants to contribute ideas for what NYSSRA Nordic can do to help clubs create and organize events for next winter. Points are summarized below.

- NYSSRA should encourage organizers to conduct more creative and fun format races. Eric Hamilton described the two most memorable competitive events during the pandemic season: the first was one suggested by Eric Seyse early in the 2020 - 2021 season after an early December nor'easter where he challenged participants in a virtual relay to ski and time a one kilometer loop with a short recovery between the two loops. Report your best two times so you can compare with others across the region. The second was the Fishscale Festival that Chris Yarsevich hosted at Brookhaven Golf Course, Greenfield. The course included some groomed trails, some snowshoe trails and stream and road crossings where ski removal was necessary. Eric added that more race organizers should consider events of this type. Groans from others present indicated that others did not share his enthusiasm.
- Create a series of races with a special designated class for post high school racers that no longer race – to get them to return to NYSSRA races.
- Reintroduce the concept of qualifier races for the ESWG or NYSSRA Nordic Championships. Mark Chmielewicz asked if there was some way to use ESWG participation as an incentive for people to try other races earlier in the season. Kind of like the old schedule of qualifying races that got you into the ESWG. Perhaps tie to a discounted entry fee for those who prequalified.
- These would also be training opportunities for participants to prepare for the higher level of competition.
- Have a NYSSRA Nordic representative attend the NYS high school coaches meeting at the start of the season. Make a pitch to the coaches for them to encourage their racers to do NYSSRA races. Get Bob Underwood involved in that role.
- Find a way to keep high school racers racing if they don't make States or JNs.
- Set up big day races with NYSSRA races in the morning followed by JN and then high school., like in past races at Crandall Park.

- Schedule a roller ski championship with “big prizes” provided by sponsors to attract participants. Consider a way to tie a roller-ski race to a popular road running race to provide exposure to Nordic ski racing.
- Get all races listed in advance of the season so people can plan their overall season. This is how it was done pre-internet with NYSSRA Nordic’s printed *Competition Manual* booklet. Get organizers to plan an event with a committed race date coordinated on the calendar (fall meeting), give organizers a reduced sanction fee incentive for early sanctioning.
- NYSSRA should send a letter to potential event organizers in August to outline sanctioning requirements and start the planning process before the fall meeting. Include in the letter information about the background checks policy and other updates for the season.
- How do we attract volunteers needed for the FISU World University Games on Jan. 12-22, 2023? Biathlon, Nordic combined, and cross country will require over 100 volunteers for each event. This will require more than volunteers from the northeast region. Will lodging be available for officials and volunteers?
- Our web presence needs to be updated to reflect our goals and enthusiasm for each of the Nordic ski sports. This includes the website, social media, blog posts, and publicity.

Nominating Committee - The following agreed to serve on a nominating committee to come up with a slate of officers for the fall meeting elections, with the understanding that they would not be nominated: Eric Seyse, Tom Moffett, and Eric Hamilton.
Next Meeting - It was a consensus that the fall meeting would be held the weekend of **September 17 and 18** in Lake Placid and possibly be combined with an officials training event, coaches clinic, and/or BKYSL leader clinic. Darwin Roosa agreed to check with Kris Cheney Seymour to determine site possibilities with ORDA at MVH Mountain Pass Lodge.
Adjourned: Being no further business Eric Seyse moved we adjourn, Jack Rueckheim second, carried unanimously at 9:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric J. Hamilton
Secretary

---------- **Attachment 1** ----------

NYS**SRA Treasurer's Report April 27, 2022**

Fund	**3/31/21**	**3/31/22**
Biathlon	$ 2,115	$ 1,486
Youth Development	$ 1,601	$ 1,601
Mid-A	$ 16,620	$ 17,213
BKSL	$ 618	$ 618
General	$ 18,374	$ 18,226
Total	**$ 39,328**	**$ 39,144**

Total less Mid-A*	**$ 22,708**	**$ 21,931**

*The Mid-A fund belongs to Mid-A and is ony managed by NYSSRA-Nordic

Membership Revenue

3/31/19-3/31/20	**3/31/20-3/31/21**	**3/31/21-3/31/22**
$ 8,635	**$ 5,707**	**$ 9,384**

----------Attachment 2 ----------

Spring 2022 Biathlon Committee Report

2022 was without a doubt a very disappointing year with regard to consistent snowfall. That being said, NY Biathlon held 7 races at different venues across the state. It seemed that when race day arrived, with only a couple of exceptions there was enough snow to hold the events. Races were held at Saratoga Biathlon, Osceola Ski and Sport (Syracuse Biathlon), and Mt. Van Hoevenberg. We look forward to better snow conditions next year and a return to McCauley Mountain.

There were a number of highlights from the year. Entering year two of our new Covid existence didn't deter athletes from getting back to competing. Approximately 75 unique individuals from NY clubs competed, which is level with participation from that of about five years ago. Novices were allowed to compete this year and a number of new athletes have joined our ranks. While Covid was a consistent presence, it didn't deter participation and even with more relaxed protocols we don't have evidence of illness originating or being spread at any of the events. Results from all of the events that were held can be found here.

Without a doubt, having USBA National championships in our backyard was exciting from both a participation standpoint and as a test event for next year's World University Games. NY Biathletes performed extremely well in Saturday's Sprints despite "challenging" snow conditions. Bella Wisler (NYSEF) placed 2nd in the U15 Sprint, Steve Halasz (Saratoga Biathlon) place 3rd in the Senior Master's Sprint, Duncan Douglas (NYSEF) placed 2nd in the Veteran Men's Sprint, Brian Weighaus and Gary Bracket (Saratoga Biathlon) placed 2nd and 3rd respectively in the Senior Veteran Men's Sprint, Art Stegen (Saratoga Biathlon) place 3rd in the Senior Veteran II men's Sprint. Saturday's top NY result was put in by Eric Seyse, who is the 2022 National Champion in the Men's Master's Sprint! Congratulations Eric! Sunday's Pursuit race saw Bella Wisler (NYSEF) place 3rd in the U17 class, Steve Halasz (Saratoga Biathlon) place 3rd in the Senior Men's class, Duncan Douglas (NYSEF) place 3rd in the Veteran Men's class, Brian Weighaus (Saratoga Biathlon) place 3rd in the Senior Veteran Men's class. Finally, another huge congratulations to Gary Bracket from Saratoga Biathlon who is the 2022 National Champion in the Senior Veteran Men's Pursuit! Full results can be found here. Congratulations to all who competed! Beyond the competitions, the logistics involved with holding an event of this size were significant. Tom Moffett reported that while operations on the shooting range and the use

of the new Kurvinen electronic timing system went smoothly for the most part, a significantly higher number of volunteers will be needed for the WUGs. Getting the NY Biathlon Master's community and the Nordic community as a whole more involved will be a priority before next January's events.

A tentative Summer race Calendar includes:

June 5 – Polar Bear at McCauly Mountain

June 18 – Syracuse, TBA
July 23/24 – Syracuse/Polar Bear Challege at Osceola
August 20 – Syracuse, TBA
Aug 27/28 – Saratoga
Sept 10 – Syracuse, TBA
Sept 11 – Saratoga Mountain Bike Biathlon

Potential summer clinics are being discussed with ideas ranging from increased youth and novice coaching and range safety clinics, as well as possible waxing clinics. Details to follow, so stay tuned!

The Biathlon committee members have been re-upped for another 2 year term, consisting of Brian Burr as chair, and Dinnie Slowman and Craig Wiggers as Vice Chairs. Carl Klossner, Pete Indick, and Curt Schreiner will continue to be the point people from Polar Bear, Syracuse, and Saratoga Biathlon Club's.

One final point of note is NY Biathlon will explore creating a new NY/Vermont Biathlon Points series of races with our neighbors to the east. Vermont athletes expressed an interest in doing more races in conjunction with NY Biathlon and a points series will be an easy addition to the races in both states that already occur. More details to follow.

---------- Attachment 3 ----------

NYSSRA SKI ORIENTEERING YEAR END REPORT
APRIL 2022

The winter of 2021-22 was another challenging season for ski orienteering with the continuing presence of covid and inconsistent snow conditions in many areas of the state.

Our first scheduled meet of the season in December at Lapland Lake was cancelled due to poor snow conditions and was never able to be rescheduled. We did manage to run a winter adventure event near Berne, NY, a beginner ski-o clinic at Cumming Nature Center near Rochester which attracted about 20 people, as well as a regular ski-o competition for the Empire State Games at Mt. van Hoevenburg which drew 20 competitors. The Rochester Orienteering Club also offered DIY ski-o courses at 2 locations during the season in which some 50 people participated.

Covid presents several unique challenges to ski orienteering. Downloading of racers' timing chips takes place indoors and timers are understandably reluctant to hang around for a couple of hours in a ski lodge with the general public continually coming and going all around them, nor are they anxious to have competitors coming in straight off the racecourse to download their timing devices right next to them. We managed to work around this at the ESG event with the timer setting up his equipment in Josie's Cabin and having participants deposit their timing chips in a basket outside the door, which he retrieved, downloaded inside and then redeposited outside. This worked very well and we were most grateful to the van Ho grooming staff who set up this arrangement for us. Unfortunately most ski areas don't have the luxury of offering this type of facility to us.

Another challenge is that one of the main attractions of ski-o events, as with most other sporting activities, is the social aspect where participants gather to discuss their courses, catch up on news, etc. This ideally takes place indoors during the winter, but older and/or immune-compromised participants are still reluctant to be inside around other people for extended periods of time and without this to look forward to many are discouraged from attending events.

Finally, Canadian border requirements were strictly enforced this past winter which made it very difficult for competitors from north of the border to travel down for an event.

On the bright side, the events we were able to hold attracted a good number and diversity of participants and at the ESGs we had two 7 year olds duking it out to the wire as well as an 82 year old completing her course on snow shoes. We're anticipating that as anti-viral medications become more widely available general attitudes regarding covid may relax and people more willing to mingle indoors, and with the border restrictions now mostly removed we can expect many of our Canadian competitors to return next winter. We're already planning to organize a co-ordinated schedule of meets with New England, Ottawa and Montreal clubs next season.

I'd like to thank all of our mappers, course setters and event organizers – Phil Hawkes-Teeter, Eric Hamilton, David Hunter, Janet Findlay, Gary Maslanka, Stina Bridgeman, Linda Kohn and Rick Worner – for their efforts over the past season. The co-operation of the venues and, as always, the support of NYSSRA in promoting ski-o in New York State is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Findlay